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## Las Caras en la Tierra Prometida

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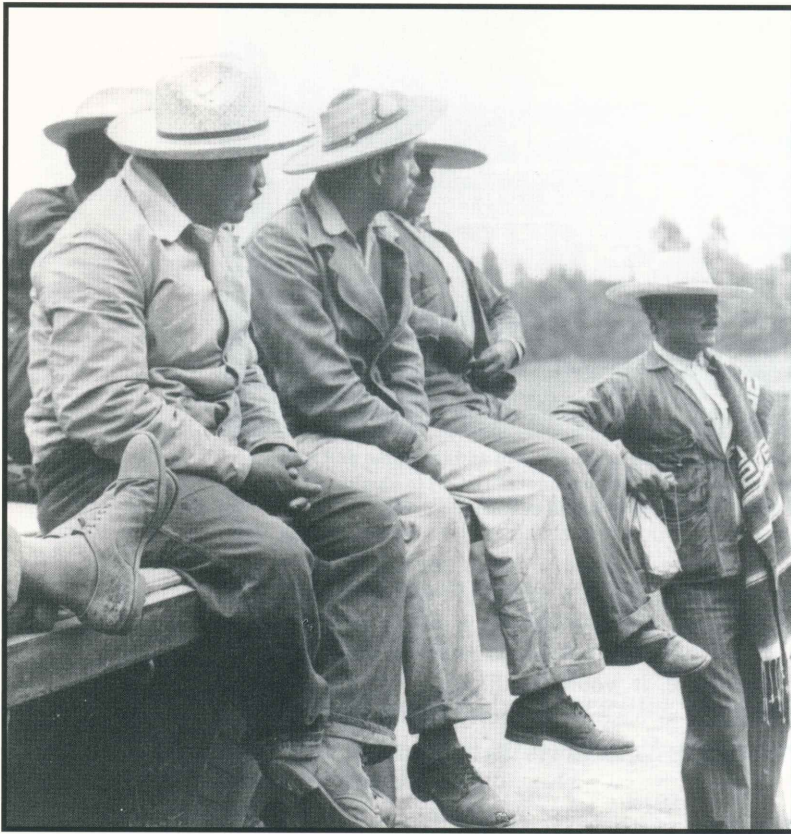
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A barbecue at Oaks Park in 1944. OHS neg. #CN23041

the 1990s, are helping to make Portland a more cosmopolitan and diverse city.

#### **El Hispanic News**

Portland's bilingual Spanish-English newspaper, the award-winning *El Hispanic News*, has been a fixture in the area's Latino community since it was founded in 1981. It is currently the oldest Latino news publication in the entire Pacific Northwest. Published by former New Mexico Secretary of State Clara Padilla Andrews, *El Hispanic News* is a crucial way in which to disseminate information to a Latino readership that is not reached through other mainstream media outlets. *El Hispanic News* has been diligent in tackling important issues dealing with Latinos in Portland, the State of Oregon, and Southwest Washington, including excellent coverage of news in Mexico. *El Hispanic News* also profiles prominent Latinos in the area and serves as a vital resource and organizing tool for Latinos in the Portland metropolitan area.

# Las Caras en la Tierra Prometida

by Carlos Blanton

*Chicano/Latino Studies, Portland State University*

Latinos are the fastest growing group in Oregon according to the 2000 census. Leading statewide media such as *The Oregonian* have reported on incredible growth. The state's Latino population grew from 112,000 in 1990 to 275,000 by 2000, a 144 percent increase. It may surprise some Oregonians to learn that while a large number of the state's Latinos are affiliated in some fashion or another with agricultural work, a growing and significant number of Latinos and Latino institutions are making a great impact upon the cultural life of the city and metropolitan area of Portland. For example, in Multnomah County the Latino population grew 170 percent from the 1990 to the 2000 census. Latinos are becoming mainstays in the city's businesses, government, and educational institutions. The increasing Latino presence serves to further diversify the City. The following are brief descriptions of just a few organizations, institutions, and individuals who, as part of the Latino explosion in Oregon of

#### **OCHA**

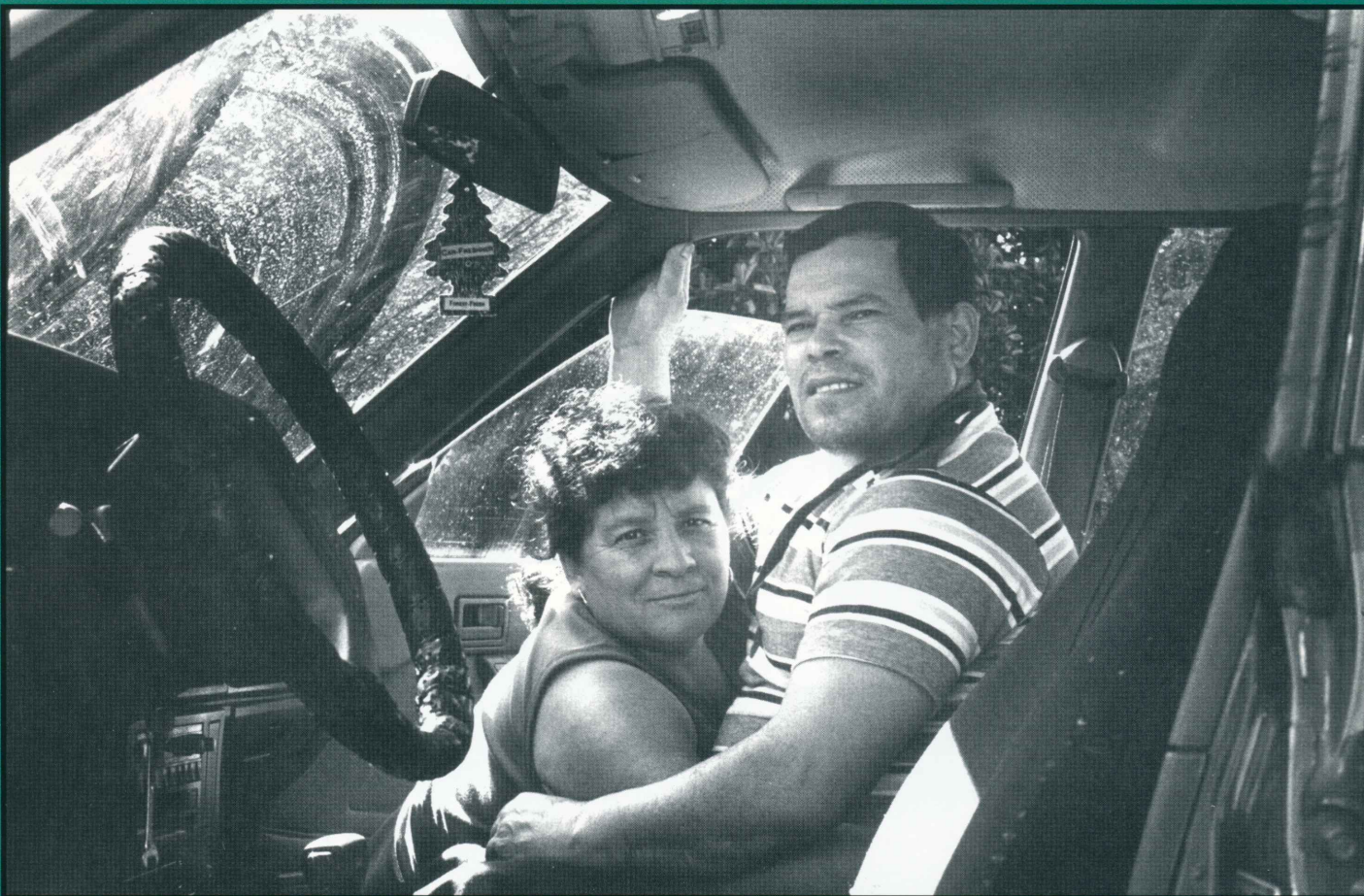
OCHA, the Oregon Commission for Hispanic Advancement, is a non-profit leadership organization spearheading socio-economic advancement and cultural renewal among Latinos in Oregon. OCHA was founded in 1983 and currently is an affiliate of the National Council of La Raza. OCHA provides several programs for young Latinos in Oregon such as the Oregon Leadership Institute (OLI) and the Straight Shooting program. Since 1986, OLI has offered a series of weekend seminars for high school students. OLI forms partnerships with schools, businesses, universities, and community agencies to boost Latino leadership skills and to aid Latino advancement into post-secondary studies. OLI is a forum for educators, parents, and, most importantly, for young Latino students themselves who not only enrich their knowledge about their own culture, but also may pick up the skills to assist achievement both inside and outside the schools. The Straight





Straight Shooting Project.  
Photographer unidentified.





**"Mis Jefitos" by Daniel Salinas. Straight Shooting Project, 1994.**

OCHA to offer a positive and supportive avenue of personal expression for young at-risk Latinos.

#### **GenAcción**

GenAcción started almost two years ago as a social network to help coordinate Latino activism in the Portland metropolitan area. GenAcción is a group of young Latinos who gather periodically to coordinate action in several venues such as politics and social change, education, cultural enrichment, and the arts. GenAcción works to provide young, urban Latinos, many of whom are professionals in Portland's corporate community, its halls of government, and its leading educational institutions, with a forum to exchange ideas and to share information about how they can help promote each other and how, through activism and leadership, they can make a positive difference for all Latinos in Portland.

#### **Portland State University Chicano/Latino Studies Program**

Started by young Latino students at Portland State University in the early 1990s, Chicano/Latino Studies at PSU has grown significantly and hopes to offer a major in Chicano/Latino Studies in the future. Chicano/Latino Studies over the past two years has added faculty, students, and many new courses. It also supports a number of scholarships for students in the Chicano/Latino Studies program. Chicano/Latino Studies at Portland State University makes an important contribution to the community by synthesizing the extraordinary diversity and richness of Portland's Latino community in an academically rigorous and challenging university format. The Chicano/Latino Studies program also takes an active interest and participation in the Latino community of Portland and the broader metropolitan









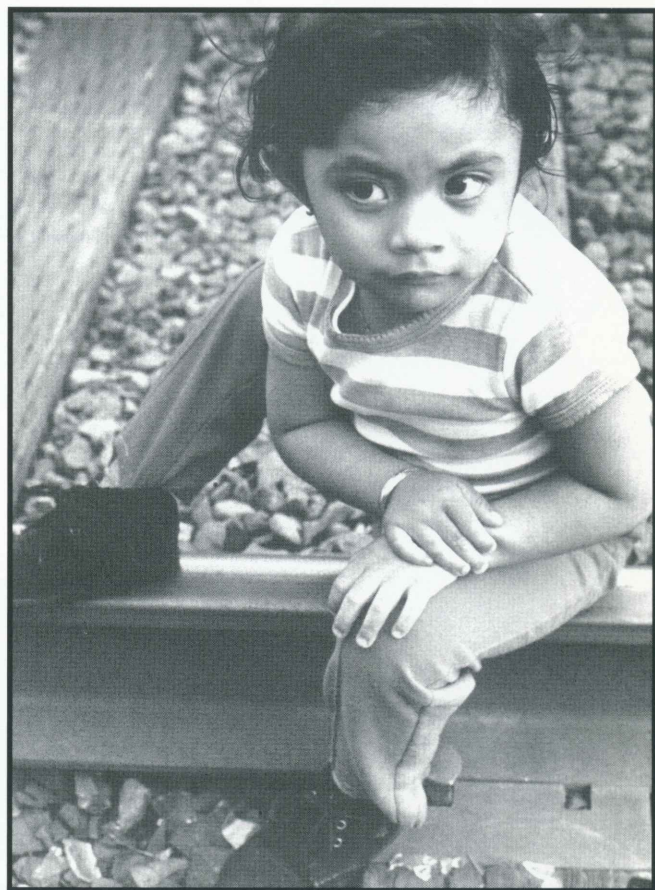
Miguel Jiminez, Roberto Gamora, Jose Gillo, and Jose Andrade taking a break from their work at the B.E. Maling Frozen Food Plant in Hillsboro, June 1943. OHS neg. #102796#11-R.

*Commissioner Serena Cruz has established an impeccable reputation as an activist public servant who not only serves the needs of the Latino community, but all residents in Multnomah County.*

area through its many partnerships with the Portland Guadalajara Sister Cities Cinco de Mayo Celebration and OLI.

#### **Serena Cruz**

Although many Latinos in the Portland area are successful and deserving of specific mention, one of the most spectacularly successful public leaders within the Latino community of Portland is District Two, Multnomah County Commissioner Serena Cruz, elected in 1998 to a four year term to represent the county's North and Northeast side. Commissioner Cruz has established an impeccable reputation as an activist public servant who serves not only the needs of the Latino community, but all residents of Multnomah County. She has been notably active in championing issues dealing with Latino education through the organization of the Latino Education Summits as well as through her tireless advocacy on a variety of issues, such as poverty, transportation, and livable communities. **M**



**Straight Shooting Project.** Photograph by Alexandra Lopez-Cornelius, 1995.